

REPORT OF M.O.H. FOR 1950.

The health of the town during 1950 was, as usual, fair - it could not be called good. We were fortunate in having no epidemics of severity.

The epidemic of mild Measles continued from the previous year and there appear to have been 62 cases. Complications were conspicuous by their absence,

Whooping Cough - 2. I do not think that this number represents the total.

Scarlet Fever - 12. A particularly mild form with no complications - the old bogey of kidney disease seems to have, temporarily anyhow, vanished, perhaps because of the better modern methods of treatment.

There were 2 cases of Poliomyelitis during the year, both came to my personal notice. One was a visitor to the town and was suspicious but not definite. I sent the case to hospital where it was confirmed. The other case occurred in the R.A.F. Station amongst auxiliaries here for the summer training - though not officially in Watchet Urban District I think it should be mentioned because no other local authority will accept responsibility for infectious disease in this particular place. As I am in charge of the Station the responsibility fell on myself. I was relieved that there were no transmitted cases, Both the above cases were of the paralytic type.

There were 16 deaths and 17 births, 6 of the deaths from heart disease. 2 only of Coronary Thrombosis of which we hear so much nowadays.

1 of Bronchial Pneumonia of which I was not notified - 1 of Cavernous Sinus Thrombosis which was a tragic and extremely rare complication of a "cold".

There were two other deaths certified as due to heart - Cardiac Failure and Cardiac Asthma. These conditions are symptoms and not causes but modes of death, but they mean that out of 16 deaths 6 were due to heart disease - undoubtedly on the increase nowadays. This probably reflects the strain of the times.

I have left Tuberculosis to the last, There was only 1 new case of Pulmonary Tuberculosis on my register during the year, this is gratifying and is probably an accurate reflection of the facts.

There are on my register 32 cases, 16 male and 16 female of these 13 male and 14 female are Pulmonary - the Non Pulmonary cases are not of the same significance as the Pulmonary. This is an increase of 1 over the previous year.

Recently there have been suggestions - in the press and some of them from medical sources, that this scourge is being conquered - I think it right to say that such is not the case. In spite of vastly improved methods of treatment we see that in our district the number of cases shows an increase of 1 - I will not weary you with National figures but they show that the utmost vigilance is needed and also the utmost continuity of treatment. Modern treatment is keeping cases alive longer but it is not curing an appreciably larger number of cases and those cases being kept alive are a continued source of infection to others; they cannot all be kept in institutions, and however co-operative they are they cannot prevent contamination.

As you have heard in the Surveyor's report the water supply may be regarded as satisfactory - when the new booster was being fitted there was bacteriologically unsatisfactory water for a short period and I had some acrimonious letters from those greater than I, but they were appeased.

There was, so far as I know, no illness due to this period of infective water supply.

The Washford river remains polluted! Owing to the higher level of the water during the year there was no great offence except to the eye.

The housing position in the light of the National position might be worse, though I should like to be able to condemn a fair number of existing cottages. I agree with the Surveyor's estimate of 34 houses comparatively urgently needed.

My remarks in my last report about ice cream may be repeated, the bacteriological standard was satisfactory, the general quality was up to present day standards.

During 1950 minor illness continued at a high level, particularly skin diseases, I do not expect to see any marked reduction of this under present living and food standards. There were one or two cases of minor illness in ships entering the port but nothing of consequence, and one or two accidents.

Action had to be taken to have the occupant of one cottage removed to an institution as he was a danger to himself and his neighbours.

The health affairs of the town in 1950 ran very smoothly, may they continue to do so.

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